UNITED NATIONS

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Security Council

PROVISIONAL

S/PV.3211
11 May 1993

ENGLISH

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 May 1993, at 4 p.m.

President:	Mr. VORONTSOV	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Brazil	Mr. SARDENBERG
	Cape Verde	Mr. JESUS
	China	Mr. LI Zhaoxing
	Djibouti	Mr. OLHAYE
	France	Mr. MERIMEE
	Hungary	Mr. BUDAI
	Japan	Mr. HATANO
	Morocco	Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI
	New Zealand	Mr. O'BRIEN
	Pakistan	Mr. MARKER
	Spain	Mr. YAÑEZ BARNUEVO
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mrs. ALBRIGHT
	Venezuela	Mr. ARRIA

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The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted.

THE SITUATION IN CYPRUS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CYPRUS (S/25492)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus; this report is contained in document S/25492.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/25693, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/25647, which contains the text of a letter dated 21 April 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

(The President)

Before putting the draft resolution to the vote, I shall call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

I shall now make a statement as representative of the Russian Federation.

On many occasions, the Russian delegation has stated its position on the question of the financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Sharing the concern of the Secretary-General and of a number of members of the Security Council, and also of States that contribute military contingents, in connection with the difficult situation of UNFICYP, we believe first and foremost in the need for the speedy achievement of a settlement to the Cyprus problem. We believe that it is particularly important right now to focus full attention on bringing the Cypriot parties to compromise solutions to the complex problems involved in a settlement to the Cyprus problem during the next round of inter-communal negotiations beginning on 24 May 1993. We are ready, furthermore, to go on seeking ways to ensure a link between the continuation of the United Nations operation in Cyprus and the intensification of the process of a political settlement.

However, we continue to have fundamental objections to the changes that have been proposed in the basis for financing the Force. We do not consider it timely to extend mandatory financing to this operation, which up to now has been entirely paid for on a voluntary basis.

The Russian delegation pays due tribute to the efforts of the sponsor of the draft resolution to reflect in the new plan for financing the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus the principle that the expenditures for the Force should be covered by the parties involved. But we should not like to create a precedent of full rejection in United Nations practice of the principle of voluntary financing of peace-keeping operations. We have

(The President)

already been forced to agree with the difficult decisions on the shift to mandatory contributions by Members States of the United Nations for the operation in Somalia and also for the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the adoption of the decision proposed today for UNFICYP, there would be no operations left that would be paid for on a voluntary basis. We cannot agree with that.

Based on those views, and in accordance with the instructions received from the Government, the delegation of the Russian Federation will be forced to vote against the draft resolution contained in document S/25693. We wish once again to emphasize that Russia's position on this issue has no political basis of any kind. This position is dictated solely by practical considerations of the Government of the Russian Federation concerning the ways to develop further the expanding United Nations peace-keeping operations and concerning approaches to financing the expenditures for such operations, which also are expanding. In our view, voluntary contributions must have not a decreasing but an increasing role.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I put to the vote the draft resolution in document S/25693.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Djibouti, France, Hungary, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela

Against: Russian Federation

The PRESIDENT (spoke in Russian): The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour, one against and no abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): This is far from being the first occasion on which the Secretary-General has proposed to the Council that the financing of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) be put on assessed contributions rather than the voluntary contributions from which it has been financed since an obscure cold-war quarrel prevented the normal pattern of financing from being agreed when the Force was established some 29 years ago. But on each previous occasion this has been discussed by the Council, the argument for assessed contributions was the argument of equity. This is a powerful argument, but, regrettably it did not win the day. It really is hard to justify that the burden of financing this peace-keeping Force should fall on the troop contributors and others prepared to volunteer and should not, like every other United Nations peace-keeping operation, be financed by the whole membership. The Secretary-General has again and again made this point, and my Government has invariably supported him.

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

But on this occasion, the issue has come to the Council not simply on the basis of equity, although the inequity of the present arrangements becomes heavier to bear with every year they last, but on the basis of necessity. The Secretary-General has warned us that as successive troop contributors continue to withdraw and one of the few remaining important troop contributors begins to pull out in a few weeks, the Force will, by mid-June, find itself unable to fulfil the mandate it has been given by this Council.

So if the Council was not to turn its back on the peace-keeping operation in Cyprus, it was clearly necessary to take a decision about the financing, given the clear evidence that the Force can no longer be sustained on the basis of voluntary contributions alone. That is the reason my delegation has brought this draft resolution before the Council and asked for a decision today. There have been long and careful negotiations designed to meet the concerns of all members of the Council. It would have been the height of irresponsibility to fail to bring the draft resolution to a decision point now, given the closeness of the moment at which the Force will cease to be viable and capable of carrying out its mandate.

My Government finds the decision by the Russian Federation to vote against this draft resolution both regrettable and disproportionate. It is regrettable because it puts in jeopardy the whole of the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Cyprus and thus, potentially, also the Secretary-General's good-offices mission, designed to bring a solution to the problems of the island. It is also regrettable because the decision the draft resolution put before the Council in no sense raised any major issues of principle. And the vote against is, in our view, quite disproportionate,

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

given the extremely modest financial implications for the Russian Federation now that, thanks to the generosity of the Governments of Cyprus and Greece, such a substantial proportion of the expenses of this operation are to continue to be covered by voluntary contributions. On the basis of the United Nations budget estimate of a cost of $47.4 million a year for UNFICYP, of which $25 million will be voluntary contributions from Greece and Cyprus, the maximum to be paid by assessed contributions would be $22.4 million, which requires an annual contribution from the Russian Federation of $1.9 million. That compares with Russian assessed contributions to the United Nations Protection Force of $73.7 million over the last year and a half, to the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNISOM II) of $25.6 million for the initial two-month period only and to the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) of $11.9 million for seven months.

The Russian Federation has voted for all three of these operations within the last three months, as has my delegation. Moreover, there is no question of the present draft resolution switching from voluntary contributions to fully assessed financing. Even if this draft resolution had been adopted, UNFICYP would remain the United Nations peace-keeping operation with by far the highest proportion of voluntary financing - over 50 per cent.

In these circumstances, my Government appeals to the Russian Federation to reconsider the decision it has taken today and to agree to put the financing of UNFICYP on to a sound basis on the lines proposed by the Secretary-General.

My Government has been associated actively in supporting United Nations peace-keeping in Cyprus and in supporting the efforts of successive

(Sir David Hannay, United Kingdom)

Secretary-Generals in their peacemaking efforts, and we have been so associated from the very beginning. We hope we shall be able to continue to do so despite the pressing difficulties, but it would be foolish to deny that today's vote is a serious setback for these operations. Let us hope it is not a long-lived one.

Mrs. ALBRIGHT (United States of America): We believe strongly that the presence of an effective peace-keeping force in Cyprus is an important element in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the success of the United Nations-sponsored negotiations between the Cypriot parties. Accordingly, we regret the Russian Federation's veto and believe that discussions on finding a means for maintaining a stable force in Cyprus need urgently to continue.

In considering funding for the United Nations Force in Cyprus, the United States Government attempted to determine whether funding through voluntary contributions remained a viable option for maintaining an effective force. Our discussions with other Governments led us to conclude, as did the Secretary-General, that it did not.

Because of the importance of maintaining an effective United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and the apparent lack of alternative methods to do so, the United States Government supported this draft resolution. We had hoped that all other delegations would support it as well.

Nevertheless, the United States Government understands and shares some of the concerns that have been expressed by the Russian Federation over the broader question of peace-keeping financing. The Russian veto has raised a question about the financing of an ever-increasing and more expensive peace-keeping burden. The inequalities in the existing peace-keeping assessment scale are beginning to call into question our ability to carry out the work of the United Nations. We are coming to the day when countries in

(Mrs. Albright, United States)

need will dial the global 911 and get a busy signal. The time has come for us to take up this issue in a serious way to find urgent solutions in the context of "An Agenda for Peace".

In this regard, two elements of the UNFICYP discussion that has taken place merit greater attention and broader application. First, we believe that, when able to do so, countries whose interests are most served by a peace-keeping operation should make substantial contributions towards its costs. Accordingly, we welcomed the offers of significantly increased voluntary financial contributions to UNFICYP from the Governments of Cyprus and Greece. These contributions would have reduced substantially the assessments of other United Nations Member States. We expected that the continuation of these voluntary contributions in the future would have ensured that there was no increase in assessments.

Secondly, we supported the implication of this resolution that the Council was no longer prepared to accept open-ended peace-keeping commitments which are not linked to the resolution of disputes. No operation should continue indefinitely. In this case, we must ensure that the presence of a United Nations force remains a stimulus for concluding a settlement and does not become a factor that simply perpetuates the status quo.

As we review our options on UNFICYP and renew the mandate of other peace-keeping forces in the future, we should keep these two principles firmly in mind.

Having said that, we still believe that the presence of an effective peace-keeping force in Cyprus is an important element in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the success of the United Nations-sponsored negotiations between the Cypriot parties.

Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): The Russian Federation's veto of the draft resolution on the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) is unquestionably significant not necessarily because of the reasons behind it - which in our view, and as the President has noted, deserve the support of the Security Council - but most particularly because of its symbolism as an arbitrary, anachronistic and anti-democratic element: the veto. At San Francisco, that privilege was severely criticized by the representatives of many countries which signed the Charter. Today, the reasons put forward at that time for preserving the veto are less valid than ever, as evidenced by the fact that the veto was used today for basically financial reasons, as Ambassador Vorontsov, current President of the Council, has himself said.

The veto was first criticized in 1945. The then Foreign Minister of Australia, Herbert Evatt, called it an absurd imposition. But not until April 1947 was the elimination of the veto considered even by the United States Congress, owing to the Soviet Union's position on United Nations assistance programmes for Greece and Turkey - coincidentally in the same area of the world that we are discussing today, though obviously for very different reasons.

In that same year the representative of my country said that Venezuela firmly upheld the principle of the sovereign equality of all nations, which was not compatible with the privilege granted to the permanent members of the Security Council under Article 27 of the Charter. He said that this matter affected the prestige of the United Nations.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

From 1653 there was a law in Poland known as liberum veto; this gave an individual the power to block legislation in the Polish parliament. Only one member had to speak the Latin words for "I do not permit it" for any measure to be vetoed. Incredibly, the law was in force for more than 200 years. Poland revoked it some 150 years ago but, even more incredibly, such a rule and privilege continue to exist here in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Speaking before the General Assembly in 1991, my country's President, Mr. Carlos Andrés Pérez, stated his concern on this matter and said that the Security Council should be a representative body and that a single member should not have the power to deny the feeling of the majority of the United Nations. At that time, the President of Venezuela proposed, and we reiterate the proposal today, that a committee of experts should be established to study a new basis for the organization and functioning of the Security Council. The countries that today enjoy the privilege of the veto would continue to be permanent members of the Council; their number could even be expanded. Decisions relating to collective security would require at least the qualified vote of Council members so as to reflect the general will of the international community.

We are concerned that this decision could affect the ongoing negotiating process, recently reactivated under the leadership of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We deplore this decision, as it will certainly entail political costs that the parties to the dispute would have been spared had it not been for the existence of the arbitrary privilege of the veto. Today, it was the financial aspect of a peace-keeping operation that was

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

vetoed, for whatever reason; tomorrow, it could be a matter of great significance for international peace and security. We must thus express our rejection of the use of the veto - today and tomorrow alike.

Mr. MERIMEE (France) (interpretation from French): My delegation supported draft resolution S/25693 in order to take note of the progress that had been made, and so as not to block the consensus that seemed to be emerging on the text. We regret that negotiations over the past week, despite the spirit of compromise on the part of all, could not overcome the remaining objections of some.

In our view, however, the Council's inability to adopt the draft resolution does not mean the end of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); it only means that the text requires further improvement and that additional consultations are needed to reach, within a reasonable time, a solution acceptable to all.

I think it important to welcome the generous gestures made by the Governments of Cyprus and Greece, which reflected their sense of responsibility and their concern to take in hand one of the elements of their security. Those additional efforts will merit specific mention when the Council sets about redefining the structure of UNFICYP, for voluntary contributions supplemented by the assessed contributions of Members are clearly an essential element for maintaining the Force.

I have no doubt that our task would be facilitated even further if manifestations of political courage and imagination showed the Council that the parties had the intention of speedily tackling the political solution of their disputes if the parties displayed an indisputable will for

(Mr. Mérimée, France)

reconciliation. European States members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe would then have to define as a priority objective the application of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes to which they have committed themselves; this would permit the United Nations Force very quickly to become a observer force with the mandate of overseeing the implementation of confidence-building measures and the reconciliation process.

Mr. BUDAI (Hungary): The delegation of Hungary truly regrets that the Security Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution contained in document S/25693. For several years now the Council has been functioning on the basis of close cooperation among its members, and particularly on the basis of close cooperation among the permanent members. Reflecting the new realities in the world, the concurring votes of the permanent members, as envisaged in Article 27 of the Charter have made the functioning of the Council more effective than ever before in its history. We sincerely hope that today's events will in no way create a precedent and that they will not hinder the Council's fulfilment of its responsibilities in the future.

My delegation considers the role of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) important and critical for the maintenance of tranquillity on the island while the negotiations between the parties, through the renewed mediation efforts of the Secretary-General, reach a new and significant crossroads. The transfer of UNFICYP's financing to a sound basis, involving sacrifices from each and every Member of the Organization, serves exactly that purpose, that is to say, to keep alive an operation so vital to the security and safety of the Cypriot people on both sides of the green line.

(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

At this juncture, let me express our hope that the fate of UNFICYP has not been decided at this meeting, and that consultations will continue with a view to finding adequate and acceptable solutions to the issues involved in this matter.

Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand): New Zealand was among the early contributors to United Nations peace-keeping in Cyprus in the mid-1960s. It was hard then to foresee that the operation would still be in place nearly 30 years later, but it is deeply regrettable to witness today the exercise of the veto which prevents a decision that was reasonable, logical and practical in the draft resolution for which New Zealand voted.

While New Zealand welcomes the voluntary contributions made to Cyprus peace-keeping in the past, and the promised contributions in the future, New Zealand believes that support for peace-keeping is, at the end of the day, the responsibility of all United Nations Members.

New Zealand fully backs the efforts being made towards a resolution of the political situation, and in this regard supports the forthcoming round of talks that the Secretary-General will be holding later this month with the parties in New York. These must be pursued.

As a fellow island State and a Commonwealth member, New Zealand looks forward to an early durable solution in Cyprus, one that means the United Nations peace-keeping operation is no longer required, and we take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the many Blue Helmets who have been deployed in Cyprus over the years in the quest for a lasting peace. They deserve better from this Council than today's unfortunate decision. And the vote, moreover, sends a wholly discordant message as the United Nations stands on the threshold of other vitally important peace-keeping operation decisions.

Mr. LI Zhaoxing (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation voted for the draft resolution because it believes that it reflects the principle of diversity of the financing of the United Nations

(Mr. Li Zhaoxing, China)

peace-keeping operations. We sincerely hope that in the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the future this principle will be reflected.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.